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FEBRUARY 2011

General Assembly Holds State Transportation Board Elections

On February 9, legislators who serve Congressional Districts 4, 9, 10 and 11 cast votes to elect a member to represent their respective caucus on the Transportation Board.

Robert L. Brown will continue his service as a Board member representing the 4th Congressional District for another five-year term.

Businesswoman Emily G. Dunn was unanimously elected by a caucus of state representatives and senators from the 9th Congressional District. Dunn fills the spot vacated by former Board member Steve Gooch who was elected to the State Senate last November.

Former Augusta/Richmond County Commissioner Don Grantham was elected to represent the 10th Congressional District. Grantham will fill the spot vacated by former Board chairman Bill Kuhlke who resigned his post last December.

Former State Representative Jeff Lewis was elected by representatives from the 11th Congressional District. Lewis' term will begin April 15, 2011.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is governed by the State Transportation Board whose members exercise general control and supervision of the Department.

The State Transportation Board approved projects for the March letting that included 22 projects in the regular program and 184 Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) projects. Combined, the projects are valued at more than \$67 million. See letting report attached. Several Board committees met in advance of the full Board Meeting. Meeting highlights are below:

- Legislative:** all of the Department's bills have been dropped:
- **Annual Housekeeping Legislation—HB 137**
(Sponsored by Rep Donna Sheldon)
 - **School Safety and Infrastructure—HB 202**
(Sponsored by Rep. Brooks Coleman)
 - **Environmental Revisions—HB 131** *(Sponsored by Rep. Bubber Epps)*
 - **Indemnification Benefits—HB 156 and SB 58**
(Sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch)
 - **On-Premise Sign Revisions—SB 54** *(Sponsored by Sen. Jeff Mullis)*

A presentation on the Special Council on Tax Reform's final recommendations was also made. As related to the Motor Fuel Tax, the Council recommended increasing the motor fuel excise tax to \$0.151/gallon; eliminating the 3% sales and use tax; and adjusting the rate annually by the highway construction index. The council's final recommendations will go before the Special Joint Committee on Georgia Revenue Structure for a series of hearings.

Public Private Partnerships (P3): Status updates on the North by Northwest, Multi Modal Passenger Terminal (MMPT), Rest Area/Welcome Center, and Communication Towers projects was given.

Finance: Treasurer Kate Pfirman gave a presentation that reviewed the FY 2011 Budget Status for the Department. To date, 46% of the total budget has been spent. It was also noted that there is a Budget Amendment pending and \$22 million in expenses on Stimulus projects are reflected as motor fuel until reconciliation is finalized.

Financial reports for January were reviewed including cash balances, motor fuel collections, lettings report and employment. An update was also provided on De-obligations. Since October, about \$34 million has been de-obligated and staff is continuing their efforts and cleaning up projects.

- Intermodal:** A presentation was given on the Savannah Harbor Deepening Project. Highlights of the project include deepening the channel from 42 to 48 feet; adding two passing lanes; and extending the bar channel another 7 miles.
- Another presentation to update the Committee on the Human Services Transportation Plan. The presentation outlined the goals of the plan, benefits of coordination, efforts made to date including statewide efforts.

Did You Know?

STATE FUND COLLECTIONS

The estimated motor fuel collection, fiscal year to date, is \$540,838,503.02 and is 3.21 percent over budget. This represents an increase of 15.91% over last year's collections of \$466,613,822.42 for the same time period.

TOTAL GDOT EMPLOYMENT FIGURE

The total employment figure for the month ending January 31, 2011 is 4,755.

NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FY 2010

- Delivered more than 1,000 projects across the state, valued at \$ 1.4 billion!
- ROW also has been significantly streamlined with additional consultants that help us fast-track projects. Now, each project has established ROW performance measures that are routinely tracked so we stick to the overall project schedule.
- This year, we've also incorporated Value Engineering (VE) on projects above \$25 million to improve project quality, constructability and lower life-cycle costs.
- In 2010, 90% of the 1,256 projects completed by the Construction division were completed within the original schedule, and 93% within the revised schedule deadline. Congratulations to the construction staff for reducing the average time for contract modifications from 91 days in 2009, to 52 days in 2010.

Next Board Meeting: Atlanta, Georgia— March 17th